



**APPLY
YOURSELF
FLORIDA**

2019-2020

Site Coordinator Toolkit

ACAC
American College Application Campaign

FLORIDA
COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

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Dear Reader,

On behalf of Florida College Access Network (FCAN),

thank you for participating in Apply Yourself Florida! This initiative would not be possible without the work of schools like yours across the state!

Apply Yourself Florida is part of the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), a national effort to increase the number of low-income and first-generation college students who apply to at least one college or career school. Participating schools dedicate time and space during the normal school hours where students have the opportunity to submit an application to the school of their choice with the help of dedicated volunteers.

Apply Yourself Florida is one of four statewide initiatives that encourages and assists high school seniors as they take their next educational steps. FCAN also coordinates the Florida FAFSA Challenge, Florida College Decision Day and Plan It Florida. These initiatives support high school seniors with applying for financial aid, celebrating students for their postsecondary plans, and ensuring all high school seniors graduate with a college or career plan. We look forward to your school participating in Plan It Florida and, we hope, all four College Ready Florida initiatives!

This guide gives an overview of Apply Yourself Florida and provides resources to help you implement the initiative. [You can find additional resources here.](#)

Please share your successful strategies with us! Much of what makes this toolkit helpful is the many successful strategies shared with us from schools like yours around the state. Your story will help fellow coordinators host impactful programs at their schools. We may even feature your achievements throughout the campaign on our blog or social media!

Contact our Programs Coordinator, LaVerne Handfield, at lhandfield@floridacollegeaccess.org or at (813) 974-8712 with questions and suggestions.

**FCAN thanks Helios Education Foundation for its
generous support of Apply Yourself Florida**



About Florida College Access Network

Florida College Access Network (FCAN) is Florida's first collaborative network committed to ensuring all Floridians have the opportunity to achieve an education beyond high school and prosper in Florida's dynamic economy.

Our Mission: To create and sustain a statewide network that catalyzes and supports communities to increase college and career preparation, access, and completion for all students.

Our Vision: At least 60% of working-age Floridians will hold a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential by the year 2025.

Our Guiding Values:

- **College is postsecondary education.** Florida College Access Network uses the term "college" to refer to the attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials beyond high school, including technical certificates and academic degrees.
- **College readiness is career readiness.** All Florida students deserve to receive a high-quality Pre K-12 education, which prepares them academically for success in college or a career.
- **College is for everyone.** All Florida students deserve the opportunity to pursue a high-quality postsecondary education that prepares them to effectively communicate, engage, and compete in the 21st century knowledge-based global economy.
- **College is a public good.** Postsecondary educational opportunity and attainment are critical to a just and equitable society, strong democracy, robust economy, and healthy communities.



LaVerne Handfield

**Florida College Access Network
Programs Coordinator**

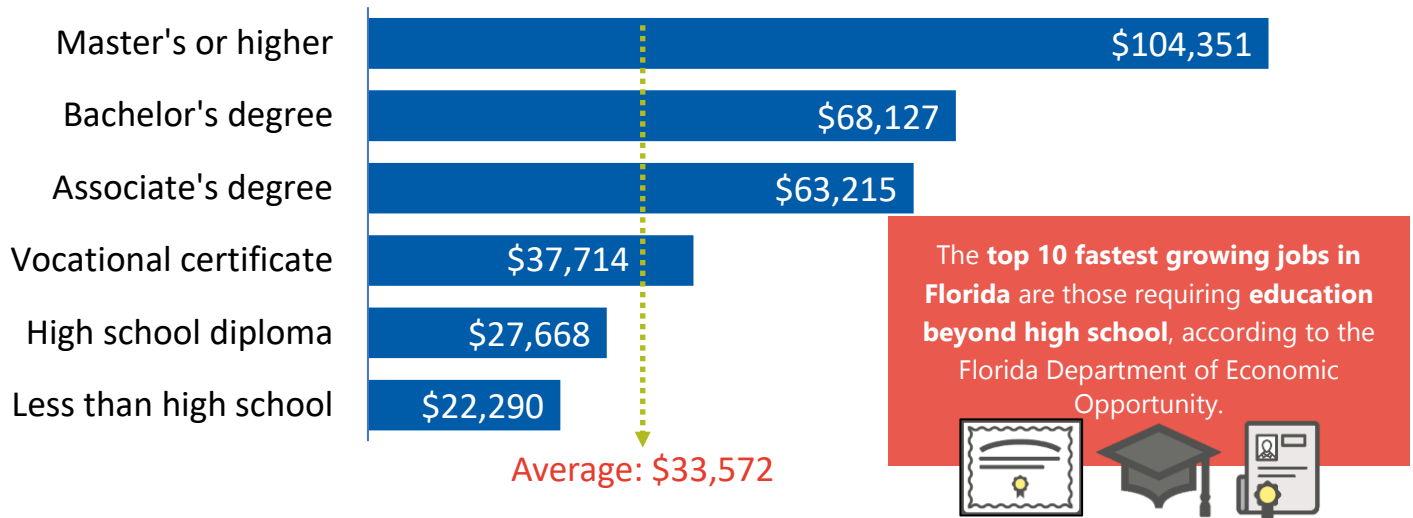
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The More You Learn, The More You Earn!

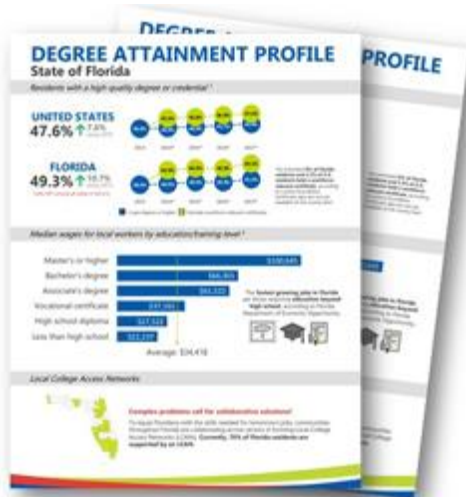
By the time today's students enter the workforce, the majority of jobs in Florida will require a degree or credential beyond high school. The word "college" is used to describe any high-quality, credential-granting **education or training beyond high school**, including **2-year degrees, 4-year degrees, technical certificates** and **industry-recognized credentials**.

Median wages for local workers by education/training level¹



Why College Matters

- **Higher education levels** lead to higher paying jobs and **more lifetime earnings**.
- Today's students need a postsecondary degree or credential to **earn a middle-class income**.
- By the year 2025, **65% of jobs** will require education beyond high school; currently, **only about 49% of Floridians** hold such a credential.



Learn about Your County's Degree Attainment

Download your county's degree attainment profile to learn more about your area's college-going rates

¹Median Earnings: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, 2017.

About Apply Yourself Florida

Apply Yourself Florida is part of the [American College Application Campaign \(ACAC\)](#), a national effort to increase the number of low-income and first-generation students applying to college. Host sites hold Apply Yourself Florida events over one or more days in October or November, depending on the school's needs.



Florida

Apply Yourself Florida is endorsed by



The purpose of Apply Yourself Florida is to help students navigate the college application admissions process with the assistance of school staff and volunteers while removing barriers they may face such as transportation and access to technology.

Apply Yourself Florida events should:

- Be hosted **during school hours**, or during a regularly scheduled after-school program, to make it easy for students to participate.
- Be open at **all graduating seniors**.
- Give students the opportunity to apply to the college, university, or technical school **of their choice**.

Register Today!

- School districts, local college access networks (LCANs), and community organizations can register as host sites for Apply Yourself Florida.
- Registrants get access to free resources and promotional materials, as well as email support with helpful updates.
- Registering helps FCAN track the progress of Apply Yourself Florida and grow the initiative, which makes more resources available for coming years!

What Do Sites Need to Host Apply Yourself Florida?

- 1 Time and space for the event**
- 2 Computer access for students to work on applications**
- 3 Volunteers to help students with applications**
- 4 Snacks or incentives for students who complete applications (optional)**

Responsibilities of Participating High Schools/Organizations

- **Register as an official host site** at <http://floridacollegeaccess.org/initiatives/college-ready-florida-registration-2019-2020/>. Schools, districts, local college access networks (LCANs), and community organizations can register as host sites for Apply Yourself Florida. Registrants get access to free resources and promotional materials, as well as email support with helpful updates.
- **Designate a host site coordinator** as the primary point of contact for the event.
- **Host an event during school hours**, or during a regularly-scheduled after-school programs. Some schools may host an event over multiple days, depending on the school's needs. Secure a space with computer access for student use during the event (e.g. your school's Media Center or library).
- **Promote the event** to students, parents and within the school to build participation.
- **Ensure students are prepared** to participate in the event (essays are completed prior to the event, students have researched the institutions to which they want to apply, etc.). *See the College Research Worksheet and College Worksheet for handouts to provide to students.*
- **Engage the local community**, students, families and other through volunteer opportunities, information letters, and advertising the program.
- **Recruit volunteers.** Ask community leaders from the local area to help with the event. Some examples of volunteers include representatives from the admissions and financial aid offices at local colleges and universities; local library staff; local professional associations; Chambers of commerce; LCANs; parents/PTAs; Board of Education staff and school board members; and after-school programs.
- **Collect and submit data** to FCAN following the event on the number of students served and the number of applications submitted.

What Resources are Available?

- **Apply Yourself Student Guide**
- **College-Going Culture Toolkit**
- **Apply Yourself Florida stickers**

Optional Activities

- Organize a **planning committee** to support implementation of the event.
- Seek support from your area's **Local College Access Network (LCAN)** if you have one.
- Make the **Apply Yourself Student Guide** available before the event to ensure students are prepared.
- Follow up with students to ensure they have **completed their applications** and **submitted the FAFSA**.
- Continue building a college-going culture by registering for the **Florida FAFSA Challenge** and **Florida College Decision Day**.

Here's a Tip!

School buy-in is important for a successful event! Engage teachers and other staff to help with pre-event activities and application events. Use student government representatives or other peer-to-peer mentors to spread the word amongst students.

Preparing Students

College Exploration and Application



Helping Students with College Exploration

It is important that students have the opportunity to apply to the school of their choice during your school's Apply Yourself Florida event. There are many resources available to help students determine which schools are a good fit for them.

Apply Yourself Student Guide

- Prepares students to complete applications.
- Should be made available to students 3-4 weeks prior to the event.
- Available for download

Resources

Explore Fit and Match

Schools that are a good fit align with a student's values and preferences regarding student life, class size, location, etc. Schools that are a good match align well with a student's academic record.

The following resources help students explore these factors:

- [MyCareerShines](#)
- [FloridaShines](#) (Specific to Florida schools)
- [ACT Profile](#)
- [Big Future](#)

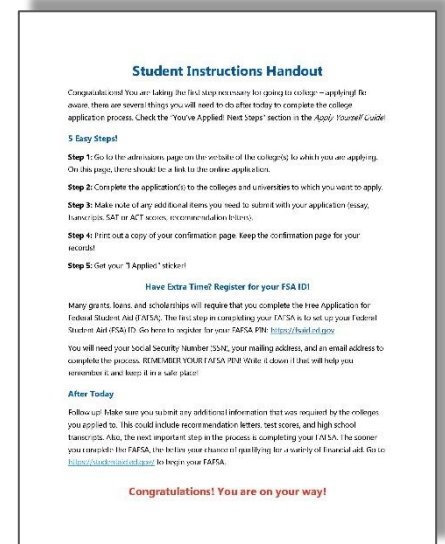
Text Advising

Text advising can be helpful way for your students to get information about college [GetSchooled](#) provides free text advising from real people on topics like college applications and financial aid.

Prepare for Completing Applications

Distribute the Student Instructions Handout on the day of the event to help students work on their applications. The student guide includes additional tools to help students with:

- Writing admissions essays
- Requesting letters of recommendation
- Obtaining fee waivers



Student Instructions Handout

Application Fee Waivers



of Florida students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, making Florida the **8th Highest** in the nation for percentage of eligible students.²

Most of these students also qualify for **college application fee waivers**.

ACT College Application Fee Waivers

Eligibility: Students who used a fee waiver to take the ACT exam.

Access: School counselors should print the necessary number of fee waivers and sign off on student eligibility. Students must also sign the form.

[Download the fee waiver here](#)

SAT College Application Fee Waivers

Eligibility: Students who used a fee waiver to take the SAT exam or SAT subject test.

Access: Students can access the fee waivers directly through their online College Board Account. Students may use up to four fee waivers. Counselor approval is not required.

[Find more information here](#)

National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC) College Application Fee Waivers

Eligibility: Students are eligible for up to four fee waivers if they meet at least one of these criteria:

- The student used a fee waiver to take the SAT or ACT
- The student is enrolled in a free or reduced-price lunch program
- The student is enrolled in a program for low-income students (TRIO, Upward Bound)
- The student's family qualifies for public assistance
- The student is a ward of the state
- Other special circumstances outlined by the school counselor

Access: School counselors must print the form and sign off on student eligibility.

[Download the form here](#)

Make Sure Students Know...

- ❖ Their college application is not considered complete until the fee waiver is received by the school.
- ❖ If they are not using a fee waiver, they will need a credit card to pay the application fee.

² U.S. Department of Education, Number and percentage of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, by state: 2014-15. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_204.10.asp.

Fee Waivers by School

School Name	Waivers Accepted	How to Use the Waiver
Florida A&M University (FAMU)	ACT, SAT	Apply online using the application for FL Fee Waiver applicants. Attach the fee waiver prior to submission.
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)	ACT, SAT	Students should submit the application without payment and mail the fee waiver to the address listed on the application screen.
Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)	ACT, SAT	<p>Complete online application and answer question about application fee waivers. After answering questions on application, wait for fee waiver code to be sent from admissions office. Then, mail the fee waiver to the address below, or email to undergrad@fgcu.edu.</p> <p>Florida Gulf Coast University Office of Undergraduate Admissions 10501 FGCU Blvd. S. Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565</p>
Florida International University (FIU)	ACT, SAT	Upon reaching payment page, select "pay by check" option. Then, mail the waiver to the address on the page, or email the waiver to admiss@fiu.edu .
Florida Polytechnic University	ACT, SAT	On the payment page, select the "pay by fee" waiver option. Mail the fee waiver to the admissions officer, or email admissions@flpoly.org .
Florida State University (FSU)	ACT, SAT, NACAC	<p>Submit part 1 of application. In part 2 of application, upload a copy of your signed fee waiver. The waiver may also be faxed to 850-644-0197, emailed to admissions@fsu.edu, or mailed to:</p> <p>FSU Admissions PO Box 3062400 Tallahassee, FL 32306</p>
New College of Florida	ACT, SAT, NACAC, Common App	Submit fee waiver through the Common App website.

Fee Waivers by School Contd.

School Name	Waivers Accepted	How to Use the Waiver
University of Central Florida (UCF)	ACT, SAT, NACAC, Common App	Submit application without payment. Mail a written request and fee waiver to the address listed on application screen or submit via email to uaoperation@ucf.edu . Please include your name and date of birth. If a Social Security Number (SSN) appears on the waiver request, please black out all but the last four digits for security purposes. If using the Common App, submit the fee waiver through the Common App website.
University of Florida (UF)	ACT, SAT	On the payment screen, select the "mail payment" option. Mail the fee waiver to the address on the application screen.
University of North Florida (UNF)	ACT, SAT, NACAC	Submit your application without payment. Mail fee waivers to: 1 UNF Drive Jacksonville, FL 32224.
University of Florida (USF)	ACT, SAT, NACAC	Submit application without payment. Mail fee waiver to address listed on application screen, email to admissions@usf.edu , or fax to 813-974-9689.
University of West Florida (UWF)	ACT, SAT, NACAC	Select mail in payment option. Then send waivers to UWF via email, or regular mail, or drop it off in person. Email: admissions@uwf.edu Mail to: UWF Undergraduate Admissions 11000 University Pkwy. Bldg. 18 Pensacola, FL 32514

Application Deadlines

School Name	General Deadline	Priority Deadline
Florida A&M University (FAMU)	June 15	November 1 (priority scholarship consideration)
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)	April 15	February 15 Students should submit the application without payment and mail the fee waiver to the address listed on the application screen.
Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)	March 1	November 1 Complete online application and answer question about application fee waivers. After answering questions on application, wait for fee waiver code to be sent from admissions office. Then, mail the fee waiver to the address below, or email to undergrad@fgcu.edu . Florida Gulf Coast University Office of Undergraduate Admissions 10501 FCU Blvd. S. Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565
Florida International University (FIU)	April 15	November 15 (merit scholarship deadline)
Florida Polytechnic University	Rolling Admissions after November deadline	November 1 (priority admissions consideration)
Florida State University (FSU)	March 1	November 1 (priority admissions consideration)
New College of Florida	July 1	Early decision (November 1) March 1 (priority admissions consideration)
University of Central Florida	May 1	
University of Florida	November 1	
University of North Florida	Rolling admissions	October 31 (priority admission consideration)
University of South Florida	June 1	November 1 (preferred admission consideration) January 1 (preferred financial aid deadline) January 15 (scholarship consideration deadline)
University of West Florida	June 1	December 1 (priority scholarship deadline) December 15 (priority financial aid deadline)

Supporting Undocumented Students

Florida is home to many undocumented students, or students with undocumented parents. These students may have unique needs when completing their college applications.

Students May be Eligible for an Out-of-State Tuition Fee Waiver if...

- **They attended high school in Florida for 3 consecutive years immediately prior to graduation**
- **They apply to a postsecondary institution within 24 months of high school graduation**
- **They submit an official Florida transcript to verify attendance and graduation**

Did You Know?

- Some undocumented students qualify for out-of-state tuition fee waivers that allow them to pay in-state tuition at Florida institutions.
- Undocumented students do not qualify for state or federal financial aid and should only complete a FASA if they are applying for a scholarship or institutional aid that requires it.
- DACA recipients can use their workforce authorization number in place of a social security number, but still cannot receive federal or state financial aid.

Best Practices for Working with Undocumented Students

- Make undocumented student resources available to all students. This will help students feel more comfortable asking for help. This also ensures that all students can get access to these resources without having to disclose their immigration status.
- Once admitted to a school, eligible students will need to file an HB951 Out-of-State Fee Waiver. Students may need help finding this waiver on the institution's website and submitting it to the correct office.
- Some documented students may have undocumented parents. In the past, the recommendation has been for parents without a social security number to use 000-00-0000 instead. Always encourage parents to use their discretion in these cases.

Event Planning

Resources & Strategies



Pre-event Awareness & Activities

Build Your Dream Team!

As the saying goes, “**many hands make light work.**” Many success full host site coordinators for Apply Yourself Florida work with a planning committee or **Dream Team** to plan and promote college readiness activities at their schools.

Why Have a Committee?

Planning committees can serve a variety of roles, including:

- Dividing labor in planning your school’s Apply Yourself Florida event
- Planning other events surrounding college application activities
- Planning college readiness activities throughout the year (FAFSA completion, Decision Day, etc.)

Possible Planning Committee Members

- **School counselors**
- **Teachers**
- **Administrators**
- **Parents/PTA**
- **Student leaders**
- **Community members**
- **Local College Access Network (LCAN) members**

Spotlight

At Freedom High School, Jamie Wolford teamed up with an AVID teacher to provide seniors a chance to complete college applications, scholarships, and the FAFSA all month during October; they called this “KNOctober” as a way to get students to knock out those applications.

First period every day was designated for students to report to their AVID classroom to work on applications.



Jamie Wolford
College & Career Counselor
Freedom High School

Event Timeline

Time to Event	Tasks to Complete
7-8 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Designate a site coordinator and register with FCAN <input type="checkbox"/> Set up an Apply Yourself Florida committee at your school to aid in planning <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm event dates with your school's administration and tech team <input type="checkbox"/> Reserve computer lab space for event and volunteer training
6 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize your event schedule and create an event promotion plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan to reach out to local businesses for in-kind donations <input type="checkbox"/> Decide how many volunteers you need (we recommend 3 per 20-25 students)
5 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine raffle prizes, and begin contacting local businesses if necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Start recruiting volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Begin preparing students for application process
4 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Begin collecting supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Begin promoting the event in the school/community <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to reach out to businesses/volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Invite elected officials <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize how you will recognize donors before, during, and/or after the event
3 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make arrangements for students who need application fee waivers <input type="checkbox"/> Create a schedule for volunteers (be sure to account for breaks) <input type="checkbox"/> If hosting volunteer training, prepare presentation
2 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize volunteer list and complete required background checks <input type="checkbox"/> Share time/place of the event and confirm volunteer participation <input type="checkbox"/> Send out a press release if you plan to work with local media <input type="checkbox"/> Send out parent information letter
1 Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all supplies are ready <input type="checkbox"/> Send reminders to volunteers, and host volunteer training/send webinar link <input type="checkbox"/> Remind school and community of event schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Remind students and families to complete worksheets in student guide <input type="checkbox"/> Remind students to bring a form of payment or fee waiver
Day of Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask volunteers to arrive early (15 minutes for a quick orientation, 45 minutes if hosting day-of training) and provide refreshments <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure computers and printers are working <input type="checkbox"/> Set up a sign-out station for data collection <input type="checkbox"/> Hang signs/decorations <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure each student receives an instruction sheet and starts working <input type="checkbox"/> Pair volunteers with students who need extra assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Remind students to print out confirmation pages for applications <input type="checkbox"/> Direct students who have completed applications to sign out/receive sticker <input type="checkbox"/> Hand out fliers for follow-up activities, like FAFSA completion <input type="checkbox"/> Take pictures to share with FCAN!
After Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with students who need to submit fee waivers <input type="checkbox"/> Send thank you letters to volunteers and businesses who supported the event <input type="checkbox"/> Send follow-up letters to participating students and families <input type="checkbox"/> Remind students to complete the FAFSA <input type="checkbox"/> Submit participation data and feedback to FCAN using the site coordination survey (the link will be emailed before the first week of December)

Budgeting

What Will My Event Cost?

Most host site coordinators host their events with a small budget. Some coordinators have hosted their event at no cost by having supplies donated.

Make sure to check with your supervisor before soliciting donations. Your school may have a policy in place.

For help reaching out to local businesses, FCAN provides letter templates:

www.FloridaCollegeAccess.org/initiatives/apply-yourself-florida/

What Supplies Will I Need?

The supplies you will need for your event will depend on the type of event you are planning on hosting. These may include:

- Food
- Prizes/raffle
- Games/Entertainment
- Decorations



Sample Budget Table

Item/Service	Purchased/Donated	Anticipated Cost	Actual Cost
Total			

Ideas for Your Event

Successful Apply Yourself Florida events often create excitement about college applications by incorporating special activities or incentives. Many schools also like to dedicate a week to college readiness activities for students of all ages.

Activities for Your Event

- Provide computers and trained volunteers so students can work on college applications, FAFSA, or Bright Futures
- Provide assistance with writing essays for college applications or scholarships
- Invite local college admissions or financial aid reps, employers, military recruiters to familiarize students with their options
- Consider providing snacks or pizza and/or playing music to create a fun environment for students

Offer Incentives!

These small incentives offer a motivation for students to focus and complete applications

- **"I Applied!" stickers (FREE from FCAN)**
- **School-related raffles (yearbooks, prom tickets, etc.)**
- **Gift cards from local businesses**

Spotlight

Mindy Edgeman at Bloomingdale High School planned a week in the fall dedicated to college-related activities.

Seniors had the opportunity to work on college applications during class time. For extra motivation, students who filled out at least one application were entered in a raffle to win a gift card, a prom ticket, or a copy of the school's yearbook.

Representatives from several branches of the military, Hillsborough Community College's Ybor City campus Workforce Training Center, CareerSource Tampa Bay, and other organizations were also on hand to provide information.

[You can read more about Bloomingdale's event here.](#)



**Bloomingdale High School
2017 College Application Week**

College-Going Culture Activities

Many schools coordinate other college-going culture activities during their Apply Yourself Florida events to engage younger students. This can be a great way to help students start thinking about college.

College Bingo

- Print out the college bingo card and distribute it to students during your event
- Students complete the card by finding teachers/faculty to sign off on experiences they had during college
- Give a small prize to the student who completes their card first!

**Download the
College Bingo Card**

“Ask Me About It”

- Print out the “Ask Me About It!” posters and have teachers display them.
- Encourage teachers to set aside 10-15 minutes at the beginning of class to share their college experience and answer questions

**Download the “Ask Me
About It!” Poster**

Door Decorating

- Assign each homeroom a college or university to research, and give them time to decorate their doors for that college
- Give the winning school a prize (candy, pizza party, homework pass, etc.)

Other Activities

- Designate a college t-shirt day during spirit week
- Host college trivia during announcements
- Bring in representatives from a local college/university to answer student questions or speak on a panel about their institution



Community Outreach

Reaching Out to Parents, Volunteers, and Businesses



Parent/Guardian Outreach

When helping students to take steps towards continuing their education, it is important to include parents/guardians. Including parents helps to build a college-going culture at home.

Parents can:

- Help students explore college options
- Provide students with information they may need for completing college applications and FAFSA, like Social Security Number or tax information
- Volunteer during Apply Yourself Florida events

Tips for Parent Outreach

- Mail letters to parents instead of relying on students to take them home
- Send letters in English and Spanish to all parents
- Use text reminders or phone calls through free services like Remind, or check with your school district for options for recording a robo-call
- Follow up after the event to congratulate their students and encourage them to take next steps

Here's a Tip!

Consider recruiting volunteers to contact parents via text message or phone call. Student assistants can also help with this task.

Carta de Información Para Estudiantes/Padres

Student/Parent Information Letter

Dear Students and Families,

This year, [NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL] will be holding [EVENT NAME], which is part of a statewide effort to ensure all high school seniors prepare for their next educational steps. On [EVENT DATES], all seniors expected to graduate at the end of this academic year will be encouraged to apply for admission to colleges and universities. The purpose of this day is to help all students with the college application process and to ensure that all graduating seniors have the opportunity to complete at least one application to a college or major school.

There is a College Application Worksheet that we encourage parents to complete prior to the event, available at [DESCRIBE WHERE WORKSHEET IS AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS]. Using this worksheet, complete and mail in the college application event will allow students to quickly and easily complete their applications. With adequate instructions and their families will need to work together in gathering the information found in the College Application Worksheet and ask that you return the worksheet with your student.

As a volunteer, if family members are interested in volunteering during the event, please let me know. Volunteers can assist with sign-in stations, assist students with completing applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities.

If you have any questions, please call [SITE COORDINATOR'S NAME, SITE COORDINATOR'S TITLE, or [SITE COORDINATOR'S PHONE NUMBER]]. Thank you in advance for your support of this meeting or letter to encourage all Florida students to take the next step in their future.

Sincerely,
[NAME OF SITE COORDINATOR]
[TITLE]

**Parent Information Letter
(English/Spanish)**

Carta de Seguimiento del Estudiante/Padres

Student/Parent Follow-Up Letter

Dear Students and Families,

Recently, your student participated in [HIGH SCHOOL NAME]'s Apply Yourself Florida event. Congratulations on taking this important step towards continuing your student's education! What's next?

File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible.

- Filing the FAFSA ensures your student can benefit from federal financial assistance for continuing their education.
- Parents and students will need to create a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID to complete their FAFSA. If you have not set up an FSA ID, go to <https://fsaid.ed.gov> to create one.
- Once you have created your FSA ID, you can complete the FAFSA online at <https://studentaid.gov>.
- If you have questions about the FAFSA, please contact [School counselor/college advisor] at [contact information] for guidance.
- For additional assistance, find information here about FAFSA events being held at the school or in the community.

Remember, schools should contact you!

Schools should be in touch with your student via email or letter to inform them of the status of their application.

If the school does not contact your student within 2-3 weeks of their application submission, get in touch with the college or university's admission office to inquire about their application status.

If you have questions, please call [NAME, TITLE, or [PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL]]. Thank you for supporting your student's future and helping them navigate the path to college!

Sincerely,
[SCHOOL COUNSELOR/PRINCIPAL/SITE COORDINATOR]

**Parent Follow-Up Letter
(English/Spanish)**

Volunteer Recruitment

Apply Yourself Florida events would not be possible without the help of trained volunteers. Volunteers can help during any stage of event preparation to keep things running smoothly.

Where to Find Volunteers

- School alumni
- Student families/PTA (Parent Teacher Association)
- Community college or university admissions and financial aid representatives
- Student organizations from local colleges/universities
- Business, community, and local government leaders
- Members of a Local College Access Network (LCAN)
- Youth program (YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, United Way)

Here's a Tip!

We recommend 3 volunteers for every 20-25 students working on applications. Make sure you have volunteers to cover breaks too!

Many campus organizations require their members to participate in community service. This can be a good source for volunteers.

Strategies for Contacting Volunteers

- Send potential volunteer groups the volunteer recruitment letter
- Always mention the need for volunteers in promotional communications.
- Reach out to student leaders in your school. For example, students who have already completed their applications could help other students during the event.
- Create a system for collecting volunteer information. Sites like Wufoo, Google Forms, and Survey Monkey can help you create online forms.



Make sure to find out whether your school requires background checks for volunteers

Volunteer Management

Training Volunteers

- Plan to hold volunteer training either the week before or the day(s) of your event
- Host training in person or via webinar (FCAN provides a training PowerPoint)

Tasks for Volunteers

Before the Event

- Assist students with admissions essays
- Seek sponsors from the business community
- Support promotion and outreach efforts
- Post directional signs around the school and decorate for the event

During the Event

- Help students access the college/university websites, begin applications, and navigate the application process
- Monitor printers to ensure printed applications remain in order and paper is stocked
- Distribute "I Applied" stickers
- Ensure students either complete a sign-out sheet or report number of applications submitted; tracking participation can help you measure your event's success and attract in-kind support in the future

Here's a Tip!

Clearly define volunteer tasks and responsibilities before the event so that all participants know what they should be doing.

Volunteer Reference Guide

Thank you for volunteering for [HIGH SCHOOL NAME]'s Apply Yourself Florida event! On [DATE(S)], all graduates begin the process of applying to college. The success of this event is the responsibility of all participants, including students, staff, parents, and volunteers like you. We appreciate your commitment to making college a reality for our students!

About Apply Yourself Florida

Apply Yourself Florida is an initiative to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students pursuing postsecondary education. The initiative helps high school seniors navigate the complex college admissions process and ensures that every graduate of a high school in the state has the opportunity to complete at least one college application. Volunteers will be on hand to answer questions about the process.

Logistical Information for [HIGH SCHOOL NAME]

Location
[NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL] is located at [address]. [REPLACE WITH ADDRESS] will be held in the [location], which is located [description].

Event time/Shift times
[When and how often the volunteers will be working at your school. Please plan to arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of your volunteer shift.]

Parking
[Provide information regarding where volunteers can park (including volunteer parking) and where it is located. What should volunteers do if that parking is full? Upon arriving at the school, please go to [location] to check in.]

Attire
We ask that volunteers please come dressed in college attire. (And other details as needed.)

Breaks
If needed, will breaks be given? Will there be a break area with food and water for your volunteers?

Contact information for volunteer questions on day of event
For questions on the day of event, please call [SITE COORDINATOR] at [PHONE NUMBER].

Volunteer Thank You Letter/Email

Volunteer Recruitment Letter/Email

Dear [NAME OF ORGANIZATION/INDIVIDUAL],

This year, [NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL] will participate in Apply Yourself Florida, also known as Florida College Application Week. This is part of a nationwide effort to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students pursuing postsecondary education. The event helps high school seniors navigate the complex college admissions process. It also ensures every graduating student applies to at least one postsecondary institution (2-year or 4-year college, certificate program, or vocational school).

Volunteers who support students are essential to the success of this event. We will be hosting our event on [DATE(S) AND TIME] and welcome representatives from [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] to assist our school.

Volunteers can greet and sign in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities. Our students appreciate your help and support as they take a big step toward going to college.

If you or any of your colleagues at [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] are interested in working with [NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL], please contact me at [SITE COORDINATOR INFO].

Thank you!

[SITE COORDINATOR NAME] [YOUR TITLE]
[CONTACT INFO]

Volunteer Reference Guide

Volunteer Information & Thank You Letters

Business Outreach Best Practices

Local businesses can be a great source of resources for your event. Many Apply Yourself Florida host site coordinators are able to plan their events at no cost thanks to in-kind donations received from businesses.

Finding Donation Sources

- Ask around your school community, planning committee, etc. to see if there are established connections to local businesses
- Identify businesses/individuals that have donated in the past. That said, be careful not to fatigue donors by asking them too often
- Remember that parents or faculty may be willing to donate

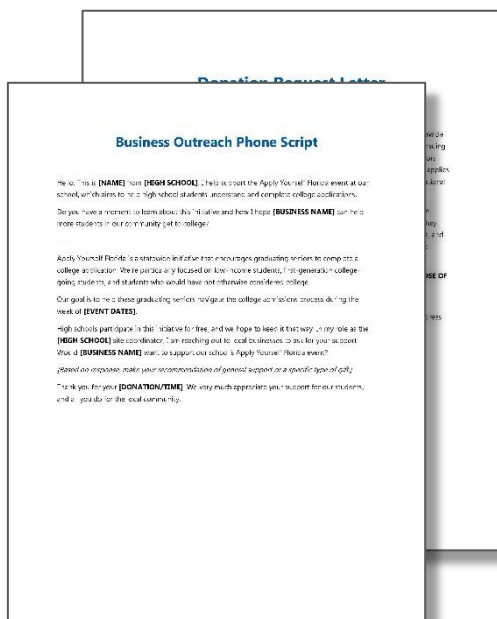
Tips for Approaching Business

- Call ahead to schedule a time to speak with the manager in person
- Bring a Donation Request Letter to the meeting, as the business may need documentation to justify the donation or qualify for tax benefits
- Be specific about what you're seeking (gift cards, food, etc.), and describe how these donations will help the event
- Consider inviting the business's employees to volunteer

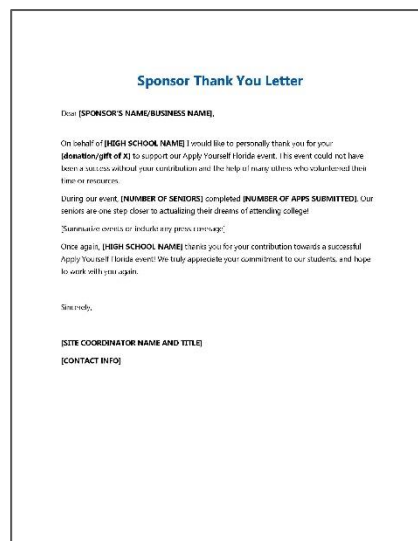
Thank Your Donors!

To encourage businesses to donate year after year, it is important to recognize and thank them.

Consider recognizing donors as event sponsors. After the event, send thank you letters and highlight the successes (number of students participating, applications submitted, etc.)



Business Outreach Phone Script & Letter



Business Thank You Letter

Promoting Your Event

Reaching Out to Your School and Community



Promotion Strategies

Site Coordinators can use a variety of promotion strategies to make sure their students, parents, and community know about the event.

Traditional Media

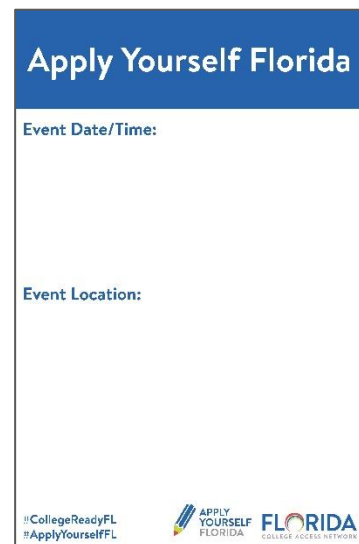
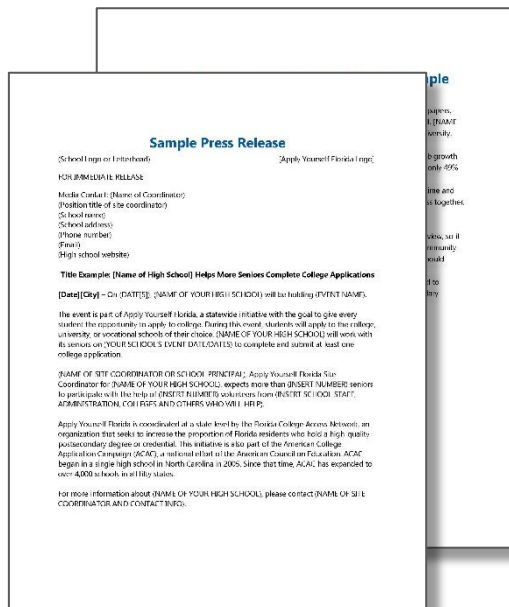
- Consider contacting television stations, radio, newspapers, community newsletters, etc. to spread the word about your event
- Use the Sample Press Release to inform the media, and Sample Newsletter Article to publish in a school newsletter
- Reach out to other area schools to explore the option of issuing a join press release



Check with school administration to ensure your media outreach complies with the district media policy

Fliers and Posters

Copies of posters and fliers can be easily downloaded from our website!



Sample Press Release & Newsletter Article

Printable Fliers & Posters

Social Media Quick Tips

Social media can be a great way to promote your event, create excitement, and answer questions that students, parents, and volunteers might have.

Use #Hashtags

- Using hashtags can make it easy for community members and statewide partners like FCAN to find updates and pictures from your event and amplify your good work!
- FCAN uses the hashtags **#IApplied**, **#ApplyYourselfFL**, and **#CollegeReadyFL**
- Consider using school-specific hashtags for your event
- Include hashtags on your posters, and encourage students to use them
- Tweet to FCAN at **@FLCollegeAccess**

Tips for Different Social Networks

- **Facebook:** Create an event that volunteers can RSVP to; limit updates to 2-3 times a week.
- **Twitter:** Post 1-3 times a day leading up to your event, and always use hashtags; tag volunteers or community members you hope to work with.
- **Instagram:** Post pictures of students working on applications, receiving "I Applied!" stickers, participating in college readiness activities, etc.
- Be sure to follow your district's privacy policy when sharing student photos!

LCAN Spotlight

The Talent4Tomorrow partnership in Sarasota took an innovative social media approach with Snapchat Geofilters, introduced by CareerEdge and piloted at Booker High School. A Geofilter is like a frame or sticker that can go on a Snapchat photo.

Talent4Tomorrow paid for these to display on Snapchat within the school cafeteria. When students took a Snapchat photo, they were able to select a filter related to the event. The students then shared the picture with their friends or on their 24-hour Snapchat "story."

The first day of the filter's run, the information was viewed over 3,500 times as friends looked at the post or saw it in the user's Snapchat "story." The filter was swiped by 367 students, 64 of them posted these framed photos on their account.



After Your Event

Following Up with Your Students & FCAN



Next Steps for Students and Schools

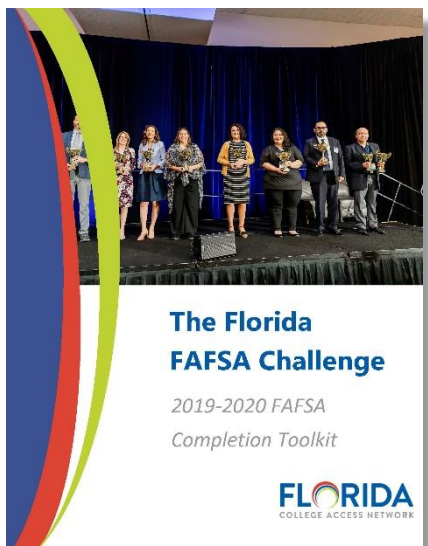
Submitting a college application is the first step students must take in the complex college admissions process. Students often require additional support navigating next steps.

After applying, students should:

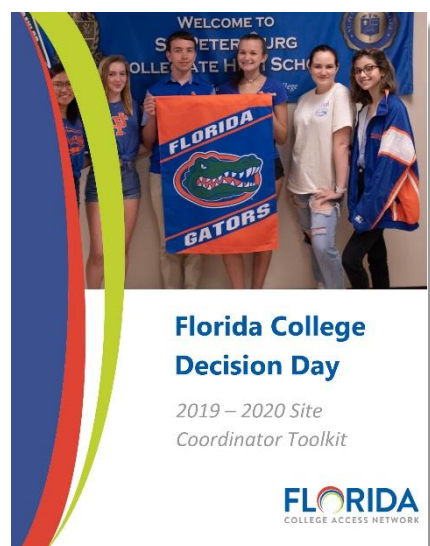
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to learn what financial aid they might qualify for
- Send in fee waivers (if applicable)
- If students mailed in fee waivers, encourage them to follow up with schools in 2-3 weeks to ensure their materials were received
- Make sure they included all necessary supplemental materials (letters of recommendation, admissions essay, etc.)

After the event, host site coordinators should:

- Submit data to Florida College Access Network (see next page for more details).
- Follow up with students to provide help with completing applications and making final decisions about where to attend.
- Follow up with parents to let them know the next steps in the admissions process.
- Begin working with students on FAFSA completion (the application opens on October 1).
- Begin planning school participation in the Florida FAFSA Challenge and Florida College Decision Day (see toolkits to get started).



FAFSA Challenge Toolkit



College Decision Day Toolkit

Data Collection

Collecting data about the number of students participating in your event and the number of applications submitted helps you to measure the success of your program from year to year. This can help you raise in-kind support in the future.

Reporting your data also helps FCAN to track the growth of the campaign and provide the best resources.

Best Practices

- To protect student privacy, do not include student names in data submitted to FCAN
- Schools may choose to collect student-level data to follow up with students and track long-term effectiveness of their application week events

How to Collect Data

- Print out the Senior Sign-out Form and have students complete it before leaving
- Set up a table where students will sign out and receive their "I Applied" sticker
- If you are not interested in collecting student-level data, simply have a volunteer ask students how many applications they submitted before they receive their "I Applied" sticker, and maintain a tally sheet



**Download the
Senior Sign-out Form**

Reporting Your Data

- FCAN will email a link to the host site coordinator survey shortly after your event
- Best estimates are acceptable for reported numbers for students participating and applications submitted
- Site coordinators can also submit pictures highlighting the success of their event

Apply Yourself Florida Survey

Participation Data

Please report the number of seniors participating in your application event(s), as well as the total number of applications submitted at these events.

School name, county: _____

Date of your College Application event: _____

Approximately how many students participated in your event? _____

Approximately how many applications were submitted? _____

Did you collect information about what schools students applied to? Yes/No

(If yes, please list all schools that your students submitted applications to)

Were students able to get assistance with their FAFSAs and/or create their FSA ID? Yes/No

Did you take pictures of your event? Yes/No

Are you able to share pictures with FCAN? Yes/No

Did you invite the media to cover your event? Yes/No Did they show up? Yes/No

Did you invite any elected officials to your event (e.g. school board member, mayor, city council member) to help them understand the challenges students face? Yes/No Did they show up? Yes/No If so, who came? _____

Did you find the Apply Yourself Florida Site Coordinator Guide helpful? Yes/No

Did you find the Apply Yourself Florida Student Guide helpful? Yes/No

Did you find the "I Applied!" stickers helpful? Yes/No

What other resources could FCAN provide to help support your future events?

Acknowledgments

This guide is adapted from materials originally produced by the American College Application Campaign (ACAC) and by Michigan College Access Network (MCAN). A special thanks to both ACAC and MCAN for permission to adapt this guide for use in Florida, as well as their guidance on the process.

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